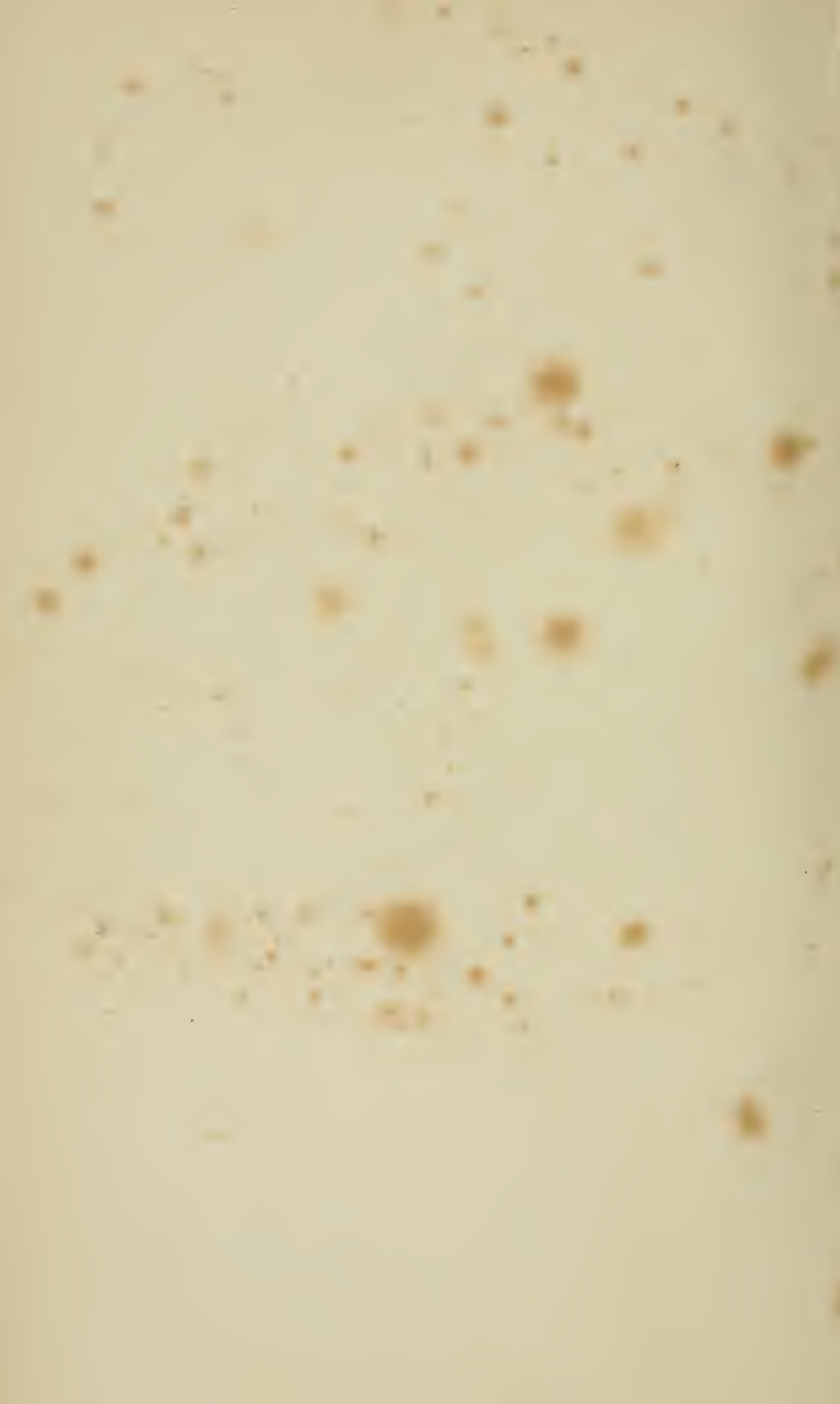






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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF GLASGOW
AND GALLOWAY,

AT THE PRIMARY VISITATION, HELD JULY 4, 1849,

IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, GLASGOW,

BY

RIGHT REV. W. J. TROWER, D.D.

BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY.

TOGETHER WITH

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED IN THE DIOCESAN SYNOD, AND AN ADDRESS
OF THE BISHOP IN RECOMMENDING THEM.

GLASGOW:

MAURICE OGLE & SON, ROYAL EXCHANGE SQUARE.

1849.

TO THE

VERY REVEREND THE DEAN,

AND

THE REVEREND THE CLERGY,

Of the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway,

THE FOLLOWING CHARGE,

DELIVERED AT THE PRIMARY VISITATION, JULY 4, 1849,

AND PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,*

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT IN CHRIST,

WALTER JOHN,

BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY.

* On receiving this request, the Bishop stated that he conceived it to imply no more than a wish on the part of the clergy to consider at leisure the suggestions brought before them by their Bishop.

A CHARGE, &c.

REVEREND AND BELOVED BRETHREN,

My removal from the humble sphere of a country pastor, in one of the southern dioceses of England, to the office of a Bishop in that Pure and Apostolic branch of the Reformed Catholic Church, which by the providence of God has been so wonderfully preserved in Scotland, is still so recent, and was so entirely unexpected, that it would not perhaps have surprised you, had I postponed any such address to you, as is usual on the occasion of an Episcopal visitation,—and indeed had I postponed the visitation itself,—until a longer residence among you had enabled me to form a more accurate judgment on the condition and prospects of this church in general, and of my own diocese in particular, than has been possible during the few months that have passed since I have been called to my present solemn and responsible office. The death of my lamented predecessor, however, having occurred very shortly before the usual period for a visitation of his diocese, a longer interval has already occurred since you were last solemnly addressed by your Bishop on a similar occasion than seems to be implied, if not prescribed by our canons;—and I have considered, that though it would ill become me to deliver fixed opinions on many subjects of local and special interest without the experience and opportunity for observation which can alone give any value to opinions, yet it might be well to seize an occasion for, at all events, expressing to you publicly the views and feelings with which I have entered on this sacred office, and assuring you of the deep and fatherly concern which I take in all that relates to you individually and collectively; in all that bears on the spiritual welfare of your several charges, and of the diocese at large. I need

hardly say, that in thus addressing you for the first time in the exercise of my pastoral office, two thoughts are specially present to my mind;—the one, how high and responsible a charge I have undertaken,—the other, how utterly unworthy and insufficient I feel myself to be for a work at once so honourable and so arduous. There are those indeed who think that because the bulk of the population has withdrawn from our fold, and the number of the clergy among whom I hold this charge is no greater than I see around me, the office is one of comparatively little responsibility; as it is here, in a secular point of view, of little rank or account. Such persons have not rightly thought either of the office or the grace of the Episcopate. They forget that every Bishop is not only a Bishop of the particular see over which he is placed, but a Bishop in the Church of God, invested with a character, and the sharer of a grace, altogether independent not only of the extent of his local charge, but (much more) of the accident of secular rank or endowment; and that what is true in its measure of every pastor, nay, of every individual saint, is still more true of every Bishop; viz. that his example, his testimony, his measure of gifts and grace, belongs to the church at large, and have a bearing not only on the immediate diocese, but on the whole of Christ's mystical body. Such persons do not consider that in bearing testimony to great principles and truths which are gainsaid, the question is not whether the surrounding multitude applaud and sympathise, but whether the testimony is faithfully borne, and the principles manfully asserted; and that the post of honour as well as of difficulty is theirs, who, in unfavourable circumstances, and amidst many temptations to relax their watchfulness, preserve the exposed or unprotected stronghold which is committed to their trust. In such a case there is certainly especial need of watchfulness, zeal, and faith; of a wisdom and a strength greater than their own; and no one who is in any measure adequately impressed with these truths, will wonder at any strength of expression which I may use in speaking either of my own insufficiency, or the magnitude of my trust. It is not long since it was seen that the sanctity which belongs to the memory of a venerable Bishop,* was in no inconsiderable degree the means of preserving the see over which he was placed to the Catholic Church; and such an instance may well remind every Bishop how little the fruits, whether for good or evil, can be foreseen which may spring from his character

* Bishop Wilson.

and example ;—how much more depends on the way in which he plays his part, than on the secular rank or extent of his diocese ; and (what is always material to remark,) how much more depends on sanctity of life and integrity of purpose, than on splendid talent, or (even) profound learning.

It is sometimes thought an advantage to one who undertakes a high and arduous office, if those whom he comes after have not been remarkable for zeal and efficiency. In such a case even a moderate share of those qualities has an appearance of eminence, when contrasted with the still less degree that was recently exemplified. I rejoice to know that that sort of advantage does not belong to my present position. It is indeed a poor and unworthy spirit that can, even for a moment, see an advantage in any such circumstances of his position. A man should rather rejoice to know that he comes after those whose excellence makes it difficult for him even not to seem to come short ; and whose example beckons him onward to higher degrees of love and devotedness than he before had even aimed at reaching. This is the advantage and the joy of every true Christian—that he is beckoned along the bright and burning path by the example of the saints who are gone before ; and above all, that the King of saints has left to each of us his all-perfect example, “that we should follow his steps.” I rejoice to know that I follow a predecessor whose eminence and excellence will be a continual motive to exertion, that I may the less come short of the measure of zeal and wisdom which he was enabled to reach. His many useful writings are an enduring record of his industry, learning, and judgment ; and his memory will long be cherished in his diocese from the recollection of his gentleness and Christian wisdom ; his liberality (even beyond his means) wherever the cause of the church could be promoted by his personal efforts and sacrifices : and the great increase in the number of churches in this diocese during the period of his Episcopate, was doubtless in a very considerable degree to be attributed to his zeal and exertions. Motives of a similar kind to earnestness of purpose and devotedness of life will, I trust, be also frequently suggested to my mind by the thought, that the* individual who was first chosen to succeed your late lamented Bishop, was one to whose influence and unwearied labours this church is very greatly indebted for one of her most important institutions ; endeared to all who know him, by the most singular and self-forgetting

* The very Rev. E. B. Ramsay, Dean of Edinburgh.

benevolence ;—and also by the recollection of that remarkable circumstance of my election,—I mean the fact that the* person on whom your choice would otherwise have fallen, was a friend with whom I had been associated at that period of life when there is least disguise, and the best opportunity for intimate and confidential intercourse; and to whose piety and sincerity I have therefore such ground for bearing testimony, as one human being can seldom have in attesting the earnestness and reality of another in what is good and noble.

But I should ill do justice to my feelings on this occasion, and to my sense of what adds a very special interest to the office of a Bishop of this ancient diocese, did I not (when dwelling on the recollections of those whose example connects itself with my present duties) make mention of that great and venerable name, which at once is associated with the see of Glasgow in the minds of all who have found aid from his heavenly writings in the great work of Preparing for Eternity—the name of Archbishop Leighton: and did I not declare that my sense of personal unworthiness for the Episcopal charge is deepened by the recollection that I am called to a chair which was occupied by so eminent a servant of God;—and yet that at the same time I am profoundly thankful to have so sharp spur to purity of life and zealously of service as is supplied by the remembrance of the saintliness of his character, and the opportunity of studying the transcript in his writings of that holy and heavenly mind. Few writings to an equal degree carry with them a conviction of the holiness of the writer. In listening, so to speak, to those truly heavenly expositions of Scripture, we seem in a special manner convinced that what we hear is a vibration of the chord struck by those who first proclaimed “grace, mercy, and peace” to a perishing world, and called men to set their affections upon things above, not on things on the earth. Trained under a system far different from that of which he had afterwards the candour to acknowledge the apostolic origin, he shows indeed at times the remaining influence of early prepossessions; and the theological student, in the study of his writings will bear in mind that original bias and influence:—but in all that relates to devout affections and heavenly aspirations, in knowledge of the human heart, as well as profound acquaintance with Holy Scripture, and a wide range of sacred as well as classical literature; in the skill with which he applies his gifts and stores to the practical enforcement of holy truths; and in the liveli-

* The Rev. Robert Eden, Rector of Leigh, Essex, Rural Dean.

ness as well as persuasiveness of his style, he is a singular instance of the teacher rarely gifted, for drawing men away from things seen to things unseen, from things temporal to things eternal: and I can offer no more suitable prayer for myself and those over whom I am placed, than that we may be deeply imbued with the same heavenly spirit, which gives so peculiar a character to every page of his writings.

This reflection on the advantage of so eminent an example in my great and gifted predecessor, naturally leads me to dwell on other causes for thankfulness in the position to which I humbly trust (and many considerations seem to furnish ground for such hope and trust) that I have been called by the providence of God. I cannot but feel that there is much in the circumstances and condition of this branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, which makes it a very special honour and privilege to be called to service within her mission.

1. This true branch of the Reformed Catholic Church has long been in a state of great depression;—unendowed, and indeed discountenanced by those whose support in a temporal point of view it is so desirable to obtain. It is only wonderful that the church has been preserved in this part of the United Kingdom; and we must all feel how deep a debt of gratitude we owe to those faithful and devoted men who claved to their principles when it was even penal to act upon them; and have handed down to us the true Episcopal succession, and the Liturgical offices which they had themselves received. The highest honour to which a child of man can be called, is to serve God and his Church; and such service is surely more honourable and blessed when it is to be rendered where it may be especially needed. To be called to lowly duties and humble offices is a mark of God's special favour. It was his special favour to the tribe of Levi to appoint them to what seemed the menial and lowly office of bearing His tabernacle across the wilderness;—to pitch its stakes, and raise its curtains, and tend its vessels;—from which appointment the thought is surely suggested to us, that the most blessed service in His kingdom is far from being such as is most thought of by the proud world,—such as is accompanied by secular pomp and distinction; but, on the contrary, that if there be any branch of Christ's Church more depressed and discountenanced than another, it may well be deemed a peculiar honour and privilege to be marked out for any ministry in its behalf; and such ministry will tend in a special manner to help them who are called to it, to conform themselves to the image of Him who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom

for many." And in this point of view, while indeed we must not shrink from reminding those whom God has made stewards of his temporal gifts, of the duty for which they are responsible, of providing for the due support and propagation of His truth at home and abroad; yet in the absence of secular inducements to undertake the ministry, we may feel with thankfulness that many temptations to worldly and secondary motives are thus withdrawn, and that we are less likely to be entangled with carnal cares and interests in the great work for which we are ordained, than if our Church was still possessed of what was once acknowledged to be her due. Nay, may we not even find in the opposition which surrounds us on all sides, a motive to greater watchfulness; and also a bond for closer union among ourselves? finding thus occasion for thankfulness and aids to holiness and brotherly harmony, even in the very circumstances which seem unfavourable and embarrassing.

2. I cannot but reflect with comfort and satisfaction, that at a time, when in England, the old barriers are being successively removed, by the maintenance of which the church was able, without violation of principle, to trust herself in the hands of the civil legislature: I have thus, in a manner so unexpected and honourable, been adopted by a church that is unconnected with the State;—humble, indeed, in point of numbers and endowments, but perfectly independent and organised in all that is essential to the constitution of a church; and unfettered by that yoke which under different conditions, so generally has hindered the synodical action of a church; and those rights of internal discipline (as well in the appointment of ministers as in guarding the sanctity of the altar) which by her divine commission indefeasably belong to her. Let me not be understood to speak as if I were an advocate of the voluntary principle, or as if I maintained the unlawfulness of what is called the union of Church and State. On the contrary, I am deeply convinced that it is the duty of a State to seek that union on such terms as are consistent with ecclesiastical principle; and the duty of the church in each country to proclaim to the State, that it is responsible to Almighty God for giving all its influence in support of His truth:—but the case is too conceivable in which there has been so wide a departure from the terms on which that union was at first established, that its continuance becomes an increasingly perplexing question. In such a case, our deepest sympathy will be with those who shrink even from the contemplation of a severance that cannot but become inevitable without national guilt; and who in their value for

what has been so dear, even seek to disguise to themselves the extent to which the relation has been altered, and cling even to the last relic of a system under which the nation has derived its chiefest blessings. It is to be expected that some people will feel the difficulty both sooner and more keenly than others; and without implying that that difficulty has yet attained to such a pitch as to call for other steps than those of warning, petition, and remonstrance, I may yet express my deep thankfulness and satisfaction in having been removed,—not by my own act, but (as I trust) by the Providence of God directing you in your choice of one who was, at the time, unknown to any of you personally, and yet whose mind had been singularly prepared for the change,—to a church unembarrassed by that difficulty; and which, while affected indeed by many trials peculiar to her own condition, presents, I believe, on the whole, the truest model of what is primitive in constitution and in doctrine that is to be found on earth. Long depressed, and even now lost sight of to a degree that might have seemed almost inconceivable, she has yet, I truly believe, been preserved for a noble career of usefulness and holiness. Wearied of excitement, and perplexed by endless divisions and disputations, men are beginning to thirst for the deep and quiet waters to which the church has ever guided the flock intrusted to her care; and they are increasingly convinced that what they need is to be attained in the form of sound words, and the round of devotional exercises which is provided in the prayer-book; edifying at once and soothing; hallowing the trivial employments of daily life, and all the affecting occasions that arise from our various relations and experience of the changes of the world, with something heavenly and holy. Men are beginning to see in what school the lesson is most effectually taught, to “serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence:” and by what discipline the proud and stubborn will of the natural heart is most truly subdued under the influence of God’s Holy Spirit to the obedience of faith, so as to become the mind of little children. At such a time, it is peculiarly desirable that those who are called to the Christian ministry should be imbued with the spirit of wisdom, gentleness, power, and a sound mind: lest, on the one hand, they repel with ill-judged severity, those who seek admission to the green pastures and the softly-flowing waters of the primitive church,—or lest, on the other, from a desire to attract those whom they see so greatly in need of a better system than their own, they should compromise any essential principle to which they are bound to bear a

faithful and unflinching testimony. Let me proceed then to address to you a few remarks, of a less specific character, indeed, than might be the case if I had the advantage of a longer residence among you; but still the result of much reflection, and of a deep sense of my responsibility, for endeavouring to give a safe and right direction to your thoughts;—on the course which seems to me the wisest, and the duties which are particularly incumbent on the clergy at a period of the history of our church, so interesting, and, in many respects, so critical.

And 1st. We must surely all feel that zeal for primitive truth must be the mainspring of all our endeavours to build up the church of God. The church is indeed built upon *THE TRUTH*. Our blessed Saviour came to bear witness of the truth. “For this cause was I born,” He says, “and for this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness for the truth.” “What is truth?” is the question of the heathen,—whether proposed in the spirit of a scoffing infidel, or of an anxious inquirer,—to which revelation enables us to make answer,—“Lord! unto whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God!” Truth was intended to be the heritage of his church; it is the birthright of her children to be trained in her glorious creed; and the first duty of her ministers is to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” How great is the difference between two men, in respect of peace, comfort, holiness, and usefulness, of whom one is established in the truth, and the other tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine? When, reviewing, as it were, our prayers, we sum up our various petitions in the general supplication that God would grant us those things which are most expedient for us, our church teaches us to desire and to ask for “the knowledge of God’s truth,” as the most inestimable blessing which we can have on earth; and therefore the ministers of Him who is emphatically “the Truth,” must ever remember that a spirit of indifferentism or latitudinarianism, is essentially opposed to the spirit of one whose very mission is to testify to others the truth which he has himself received. Now, if we would be guides to others, we must first have a full persuasion and a firm faith in the truths which we proclaim; remembering that “if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who can prepare himself for the battle?” and that it is peculiarly necessary for the christian teacher to be built up on his most holy faith, and to hold fast the form of sound words which he has

received. It is our privilege to possess those inspired scriptures which are given for the very purpose of guiding us into truth ; but then in reading those heavenly writings, we must remember that the Holy Spirit had one definite meaning, before which we must bow our minds, in every sentence which He inspired : and that in ascertaining that meaning, our wisdom and duty is to consider in what sense were those sacred writings received at first ; as their sense is testified in the Confessions of Faith, and positive ordinances, and liturgical documents which constitute the records of the church. It can never be out of place to remind you that our church is distinguished by the value which she sets on her appeal to antiquity, as to the sense in which holy scripture was received ; believing that such an appeal (reasonable as it must be seen to be by all who consider the manner in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to us,) is no less fatal to Romish error than to modern sectarianism : and to remind you also that nothing is more fatal and insidious than the spurious candour which affects to regard as unimportant or unessential, as mere questions of names and words—many differences of faith and practice, which, if indeed equally admissible, would soon carry the region of doubt and uncertainty into the most sacred precincts of Eternal truth.

But 2d. LET THE TRUTH BE SPOKEN WITH LOVE. If controversy is necessary, let it be conducted in a spirit of meekness, gentleness, and brotherly kindness. It has often been observed, that the most controversial of the four gospels, is the gospel of St. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, and Himself (though named the Son of thunder, yet) in an eminent degree also the apostle of love ;—of whose divine gospel it is said, that he who would understand its sublime and tender doctrines must himself be accustomed, like the beloved disciple, to repose on the bosom of our blessed Lord and Saviour. It is surely a very significant and instructive fact, that the office of denouncing or confuting heresies should have been intrusted to that apostle, whose spirit seems to have been most deeply imbued with the truths connected with the blessed fact, that God is love ; and that he who is the most tender, should also be the most dogmatic writer in the New Testament. It would seem,* indeed, that even he was not directed to controversial communications of truth, until he had reached that period of life, when the leaven of christian love had most thoroughly

* See the first discourse in "Suggestions to the Theological Student," by Dr. Tait.

penetrated his soul, and he was made meet for that inheritance of light and love to which he was shortly to be called. We learn, on the one hand, that the spirit of love is not inconsistent with the firmest adherence to dogmatic truth, and the most unshrinking declaration of the creed of the Church of God, in opposition to those who censure such faithful adherence as intolerant and uncharitable; but, on the other hand, we are reminded that they who alone are fitted to engage in controversy, are such as are thoroughly leavened with the meekness and charity of christian wisdom; and that till the temper is disciplined and softened by the grace of God, and the soul raised by a strong and purifying faith above the mists of earthly passion and personal sensitiveness, the champion is not fit to be intrusted with the weapons which are so bright and keen. The young, the unexperienced, the undisciplined in heart and temper, are obviously unsuited for that office of sacred controversy, which was more peculiarly assigned to the beloved apostle than to the other evangelists; and was not even intrusted to "St. John the divine," in those days when he would have called down fire to consume the Samaritans, and when he thirsted for personal pre-eminence; but was reserved for the closing labours of the trained and illuminated saint; whose "whole body" then was "full of light, having no part dark;" even the light of love which prepares for the light of glory. And

3d. I would take occasion to remind you, that although controversy must indeed have its place among the duties of the Christian champion, "valiant for the truth" as it is in Jesus; yet it can rarely happen that the pulpit is the place for it. I would earnestly and solemnly say to you that *the character of our preaching should be uncontroversial*. The great and important truths in which we differ from those around us, should indeed give their own peculiar salt or leaven to every part of our ministerial teaching; but they should be rather implied or assumed in the pulpit than made the subject of formal discussion and proof. We should prepare our discourses, and enter our pulpits with one predominant feeling on our minds:—that we are called to the great duty of preparing for their solemn account those on whom this wretched world has laid its fatal grasp, many of whom are seldom reminded of that responsibility, except during the weekly half-hour when custom brings them within the reach of sacred instruction. He who remembers that among his hearers there are dead consciences to be awakened, anxious penitents to be directed and comforted, souls athirst for the living water, to be led to the true

and inexhaustible Fountain, will feel that however important may be the duty of controversial statement on other occasions, he has before him one paramount and predominant duty in the pulpit, *viz.* to appear there as the minister of reconciliation; the witness of unseen things in a world that is the slave of time and sense; the chosen messenger to reason with careless sinners on the things which concern their peace; and that the mind on such an occasion should be filled with the simplest truths and realities—the love of Christ and the value of souls; the unspeakable importance of reasoning with men on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; even on the four last things, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. We shall do well to remind ourselves of the answer of our great archbishop, when reproached for not imitating others in—as it was called—preaching up the times, “If all of you,” he said, “preach up the times, may not one poor brother preach up Jesus Christ and Eternity.” Remember how grievous is the error of repelling by irritating allusions or discussions which it was no duty to engage in on that occasion, even one soul, which a more winning and persuasive discourse might have led to reflections on the way to make peace with its Creator, which might have issued in its eternal advantage. I feel that I must not detain you too long; and yet I am anxious to commend to your reflections at leisure, two or three other views of our duty in the special circumstances in which we find ourselves. I would therefore suggest to you

4th. The wisdom in all discussions which you may be called to engage in, of putting yourselves in the place of those with whom you are reasoning, and endeavouring to give due allowance and due weight to those considerations which are present to their minds and those views of duty which they have been accustomed to take. There is no case in which the great duty of doing to others as we would have others do to us, applies more truly than to this. How often do we wish that others would put themselves in our position, give weight to the various considerations which are before our minds, and candidly weigh the reasonings which seem to us unanswerable, or make allowance for the influences under which we have been trained. Now this is what we should do by others. We should remember that while we are satisfied in our own conclusion, it is possible to look at the subject from more than one point of view, and that it is candid to consider whether our opponent’s error has arisen not so much from an obstinate resistance against legitimate reasoning as from the habit of

viewing the question from a totally different point ; in which difficulties and objections present themselves unanswered by such arguments as have been as yet alleged. If men would thus follow the golden rule in argument, as well as in the ordinary transactions of life ; and if they would carefully think over every word they use, with a view to satisfy themselves whether it be an expression dictated by love and courtesy, and such as they would like an opponent to use in reasoning with them, whether it be such an expression as on their deathbed they would wish to have used ; there would be far less danger in engaging in controversy, and far more prospect of convincing others of the truth. Nor does it seem to me out of place on this occasion to urge upon you the duty of being free from party-spirit ; watching against any tendency to such a spirit in yourselves ; and especially against what is too common when party-spirit so greatly prevails, as is the case at present in the Church,—I mean the disposition to regard as the main question with respect to any individual, whether he belongs to one party or the other, rather than the far more important question, whether he is one who fears God and endeavours to conform himself to His will. Too often, indeed, it has seemed that more eagerness is shown in gaining partizans than in persuading men to a truly religious life ; and acquiescence in the symbols of one party or the other is accepted as a substitute for conformity in heart and spirit to “the mind which was in Christ Jesus.” Men also deceive themselves with the idea, that because they are eager and excited partizans, they are giving proof of Christian consistency. The Christian pastor will watch against any tendency of this kind in himself or in others : and especially if he sees any of the younger members of his flock adopting the outward forms of religion in any marked manner, he will set himself—not to discourage such observances as if used in a right spirit, are the means prescribed by the Church for training up her children for the everlasting worship, but—to inculcate on them the spiritual character of all acceptable services ; and will often call on them to examine the heartiness and reality of their worship, and the purity and self-denial of their lives.

And this leads me to say a word as to the comparative value of what is outward and formal, and what is inward and spiritual. Men are ever apt to pass from one extreme to the other ; and in their zeal for what they think unduly neglected, they are apt to speak disparagingly of what seems to them the immediate cause or occasion of such neglect. Our blessed Saviour set us a far different example. “These things,”

he says, "ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone." Even when enforcing "the weightier matters of the law," he gives no sanction to any neglect of observances which, though less weighty, have their due place in the system of religious practice. A due and reverential regard to what is formal and ritual, is of very great importance; and it is impossible to be even a little while in this country without seeing proof that the Christian's character suffers deeply wherever the usual forms and tokens of reverential feeling are lost sight of or depreciated. But on the other hand, I do not think it needless to entreat you to live with a deep and habitual impression on your minds, of the great truth that all outward forms are valuable only as they tend to the formation of inward character and spiritual reality: and that there is always a great danger of stopping short in the means, without arriving at the end. It will be our wisdom also to guard ourselves from thinking or speaking of what is only formal and ritual with the earnestness of feeling or language which we should use in contending for principles; and to remember that what is harmless in itself, or pleasing and even edifying to a tender or an imaginative mind, may be connected in the minds of our congregations with associations which render it offensive as well as unedifying; and that in such a case, the spirit which is embodied in those memorable words, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,"—will lead us to deal tenderly with the feelings, it may be the mistakes and prejudices of those whom we are set to lead across the wilderness. We have to contend for great principles which admit of no compromise;—let us not so magnify the importance of mere matters of taste and feeling, as to make it appear that we place such matters on a level with the duty of handing down unimpaired to other generations, the sacred deposit which we have received. An apprehension of the danger of being led to an excessive and superstitious value, for a formal and ceremonial religion, keeps many back from the blessed ordinances of daily public worship and frequent communion; and surely we shall be deeply grieved if by any exaggerations on our part of any thing unessential in itself, we have been even unconsciously the occasion of so great a loss to others.

The subject of the revival of discipline has of late in several ways been brought so prominently before the Church, that you may not unreasonably look for some expression of opinion from your Bishop on that important question, on such an occasion as this. It is

the less necessary for me to say much; first, because a recent instance, which unavoidably became notorious, must show that at whatever cost of personal pain, I am anxious to give such effect as is required by ecclesiastical principle, and may seem to me (may God guide my mind, and the mind of the other rulers of the Church!) consistent with a sound discretion, to the desire for a revival of discipline, which is annually expressed by our Church,* as also by the United Church of England and Ireland; and, secondly, because such resolutions as appear to me to be called for, will be proposed in the Diocesan Synod.† But there are two cautions which I would wish to give in reference to this subject, and which will draw to a conclusion an address the length of which I regret.

1. I would caution you against exaggerated notions of the efficiency of discipline in Foreign Branches of the Church, whether in the East or West, as compared with our own neglect. No doubt we may learn many a useful lesson in this respect; but then let us never shut our eyes to the evils of that system of compulsory confession by which this discipline is enforced. No words that I can use can express my sense of the magnitude of those evils; the proof of which is to be found in the manuals of confession habitually used; and any efforts we may make for the revival of discipline, will, I trust, always be consistent with the fact that our Church, in common with the Church of England, repudiates that system of compulsory confession, after experience of the fearful evils to which it led.

And the other caution refers itself to our own personal character and practice. If the laity may most reasonably expect that those whose office it is to edify them in faith and holiness, shall themselves be instances of the truths which they proclaim, and patterns of the lessons which they teach; so that the most persuasive exhortations are fruitless from the lips of one whose life is in any marked degree a contradiction to his lessons,—it is obvious that the success of any efforts for that revival of discipline which the Church unquestionably desires, will depend, humanly speaking, on the character of the clergy to whom the administration of a stricter discipline is to be confided. In no part of the ministerial duties is the necessity of holiness in those who minister,—I will not say more stringent,—for how holy should be the hands which dispense to the saints of God those sacred mysteries which are the

* Communion Service.

† See the address in at the end.

appointed means of union and communion with our risen and ascended Saviour; but—in no ministerial office will the personal holiness of ministers be more rigorously demanded by their congregations than in any instances of enforcing the Church's rule of discipline. How intolerable would such enforcement seem on the part of a clergy, I will not say disgraced by glaring inconsistencies, (God forbid that such disgrace should attach itself to our body,) but on the part of a clergy undistinguished by purity, meekness, charity, self-denial, and the other tokens of a holy and heavenly conversation. Assuredly those who would recall to the minds of the people the undoubted fact that among the ministerial duties is included the awful office of bearing rule in the Church of God, should themselves in an eminent degree be ruled habitually by the grace of God. The aspiration for a revival of discipline implies a spirit that is truly mortified and disciplined. It is true, indeed, that a sense of personal unworthiness must not prevent our endeavours to fulfil any duty of the sacred trust which we have received: or how should we presume to take in hand its least and lowest offices? But still there is something so unspeakably awful in any judicial enforcement of the corrective discipline of the Church, that (as this subject has at this time been brought before us in the Providence of God,) I have felt it an occasion for reminding myself and you, that in aiming at improved discipline, our first care must be the discipline of our own hearts and lives. And I am not sorry for an opportunity of publicly declaring how deeply a sense of personal unworthiness increased the pain with which, in a recent instance, I felt it my duty to act on the principle that communion in the Church is the privilege of her true members, and that it is the province of the ecclesiastical authority to decide ultimately on the question as to who is entitled to communicate.

And indeed, though questions of this kind are never free from embarrassment and difficulty, yet we may be thankful for whatever serves to remind us of the truth which should dwell in the mind of every minister of Christ, that he is called to be “an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” It is not only to be an example in the ordinary transactions of life—of integrity and regularity in the several relations in which we stand;—nor yet to exhibit only the ordinary degree of kindness, benevolence, and regard to religious duties:—but it is to be a type of believers,—of those who live by faith and not by sight—in love, in purity, in word and spirit. It is to be a witness for unseen things; to follow an

unworldly and heavenly course with so clear and unmistakeable a purpose, that others may be drawn out of their many entanglements and besetments; and be led to realize the true purpose of their being, viz., to be formed anew in the image of God which Adam lost at the fall. This is the true endowment, without which all other endowments are vain: and wherever this is found, assuredly the work of God will be found to prosper.

But there is one part of the Christian character on which in conclusion I wish especially to dwell. The Psalmist will lead our minds to its blessedness when he says, "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity." By such a study St. Paul's epistles attentively, it will be seen that one of his great desires for those whom he addresses, is that they may be at unity. This unity is unity of doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. But as the result and token of such unity, it is unity of heart; even to keep "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." If there be a grace which ought to distinguish a clergy in such circumstances as ours, it is this grace of unity. Surrounding opposition should be the occasion of a more brotherly union among ourselves. Sympathy in similar trials, and community in glorious hopes and mighty interests, should raise us far above that sensitiveness which is apt to take offence, and those petty contentions which imply that the mind is still eager about what is personal and carnal. "The man of God" should indeed be dead to that personal sensitiveness which is the fruitful source of jealousies and heart burnings. "The watchman on the height" should be far above the animosities of those who see only what is below the mount. He sees a more glorious region, and breathes a purer atmosphere. He is intent upon far too mighty a work to be diverted from the attention which it demands, by the strifes and contentions which he has learned to reckon among "the childish things" altogether unsuited to the attention of christian manhood. This, my Reverend Brethren, is the secret of advancement in this as in many other graces in which for the most part we come short. *Be we given wholly to our work.* We are charged with a message of life and death—and we learn from the prophet's direction to Gehazi, applied by our Lord himself to the mission of his messengers, the spirit in which we should go about it—"Salute no man by the way." That is, Be too intent on the trust which you have received,—a trust of which Gehazi's mission to restore life was a type,—and which involves the eternal life or death of those unto whom you minister,—to be drawn aside from it by vain

interruptions, and much more by those most miserable jars and jealousies, which, when we come to a deathbed, will seem to us to be less than nothing, only that they are so often the occasion of hindering our Master's work, and bringing reproach on his cause. Be ever looking to that gracious Master. See him moving onward on his lowly but most glorious course; unruffled by all the contradictions which he meets with; never elated to vain-glorious or self-sufficient exaltation; never so dejected as to despair or relax his efforts; never drawn aside to aught that was inconsistent with the purpose of His advent; always intent upon the accomplishment of that baptism with which he came to be baptized; in the house of joy or the house of sorrow; on the lonely mountain or in the crowded temple; amidst the faithful few, or surrounded by those "who gaped upon him with their mouths as a ravening and roaring lion," always the same—full of grace and truth; calm, meek, and patient; but consumed by zeal for His Father's house; always an instance of the wonder which runs throughout His blessed life, the union of the highest majesty with the deepest lowliness. Let our eyes be ever looking to Him till we humble ourselves to the dust under a sense of our immeasurable distance from that all-perfect Pattern, and call upon Him who wrought so gloriously of old by many a feeble and many an unworthy instrument, that He will quicken even such as us to a burning zeal, and a heavenly humility, and a constraining love, and a glorious energy; and that we may go forth to conquer in the cause of meekness, righteousness, and truth, and live and act and (if need be) suffer with a power and strength and wisdom not our own, but such as is made perfect in our feebleness, helplessness, and ignorance. And ever remember that* Love is the Great Mystery which is revealed to us as the essential characteristic of the Ever-Blessed and Undivided Trinity, even of that mysterious Unity which exists in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that it is written, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." And again, "beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John iv. 7—16.) Love is that principle, or rather that divine nature by which all pure and happy spirits are to have fellowship with each other, and fellowship with the Father and the Son by and with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, throughout a glorious

* See Archdeacon Wilberforce on the Incarnation.

eternity. On those great occasions of our life on which we most truly rise to the reality of our high calling and character, we are bold to say even here, even in this vale of tears and imperfection,—

“Thy blessed unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.”

But, for the most part, how far do we fall short of the truth and hopes and duties of our high confession;—surely in nothing more than in our suffering this fire of love to be quenched by those many sources of contention, which passion, indeed, magnifies into something great and important, but even reason perceives to be utterly trifling and worthless. Raised far above such poor and miserable hinderances,—unaided indeed by any great degree of this world’s favour or support,—but witnesses for a deathless principle—conscious of a glorious mission—bearers of a heavenly treasure in earthen vessels—and even in our church’s poverty, finding what most touchingly reminds us of the upper rooms in which apostles dispensed the blessed mysteries, before faith and love had as yet raised the characteristic shrines of christian worship,—may we be knit together in unity of heart! And join with me at this time in the prayer,—probably it is the prayer of Moses, the man of God,—the prayer, in which the church for more than 3000 years has poured forth her desires and aspirations,—“ Let Thy work appear unto thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children: and the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.”





AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. W. J. TROWER, D.D.

BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY,

AT THE DIOCESAN SYNOD, JULY 4, 1849,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

AN APPEAL TO THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND,

LATELY CONSIDERED

BY THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. ANDREWS, &c.

GLASGOW :

MAURICE OGLE & SON, ROYAL EXCHANGE SQUARE.

1849.



PAPER

WHICH WAS CIRCULATED, BY THE BISHOP'S DESIRE, AMONG THE MEMBERS
OF THE SYNOD BEFORE THE DAY APPOINTED FOR ITS MEETING;

*And which contains the Resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the Synod;
and which the Synod Clerk was instructed to communicate to the
Clergy of the Diocese of St. Andrews, &c.*

THE Dean of St. Andrews having communicated (through the Clerk) to the several Members of the Synod a printed statement of what passed at the Synod recently held at Dundee;—the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway is disposed to recommend to the Diocesan Synod the adoption of Resolutions to the following effect:—

RESOLVED,—

1. That the communication from the Synod of the Diocese of St. Andrews be respectfully acknowledged.
2. That from the Rubrics prefixed to the office for the administration of the Holy Communion, and from other authoritative declarations, it is plain that, in the judgment of the church, *the right* to receive the Holy Communion is confined to those who are *bona fide* members of the church; and that the question who are, and who are not, *bona fide* members of the church, must ultimately be decided by the proper ecclesiastical authority, and does not depend on the private judgment, as to their own fitness and qualifications, of those who seek communion.
3. That many instances have occurred, from time to time, to show that this rule of discipline is far from being the dead letter which some have assumed it to be; and that, without adverting more directly to the book which, under certain qualifications, was commended by their Bishop to the Diocesan Synod of St. Andrews, the foregoing Resolutions are adopted by this Synod as the expression of opinion, which seems to them to be called for by the circumstances of the case, and be conveyed to their brethren of the Diocese of St. Andrews as the reply to their communication.

ADDRESS OF THE BISHOP

ON THE SUBJECT OF

A RECENT APPEAL TO THE SCOTTISH CLERGY.*

In recommending to this Synod the adoption of certain resolutions, which, by my desire, have been circulated among its members, with reference to the communication which we have received from the Synod of the diocese of St. Andrews, I think it well to follow the example of the Warden of Trinity College, and commit to writing the few remarks which I feel it my duty to make on a subject of much delicacy as well as of importance, in order that I may be sure that the words which I may use on this occasion may be those to which I should deliberately wish to commit myself.

We have then, severally, (including the Synod Clerk,) received from the Dean of St. Andrews, a printed pamphlet containing certain resolutions which were passed by a special Synod of that diocese, in March, at Dundee, and also containing the address delivered by the Warden in proposing those resolutions; which refer to an appeal officially presented to that Synod, and recommended to them (with special reference to one particular question,) by their Bishop, in an advertisement dated at Peterhead, Dec. 29, 1848, officially signed by the Bishop, and prefixed to a volume containing the appeal itself, together with an historical narrative of the circumstances which led to it, and matters illustrative of the transactions therein related.

The appeal itself is not, as yet, formally presented to us; but the

* Although this Appeal was not at this time formally presented to the Synod of the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, the Bishop thought it expedient that, in recommending the preceding Resolutions to the consideration of his clergy, he should state to them his opinion as to the legitimacy of that Appeal; and it was the wish of the Synod, as well as of himself, that the Address should be printed, with a view to a consideration, at a future Synod, of the question whether the Appeal be legitimate or not.

Synod Clerk has received a note from the appellant, explaining his reasons for not doing so, to which I will presently refer ; and though it is not formally before us, yet as we have private information of its terms and the circumstances under which it has arisen, I think that you will naturally wish to know the view which your Bishop is disposed to take of it ; and, indeed, that it is on many accounts desirable that I should lay my opinion before you ; not (you may be sure) from any over-weening confidence in my own judgment, but with a view to a fair consideration of the question by the whole Church, and by ourselves in particular ; and that we may ultimately act as faithful guardians of the deposit of the faith, as well as with tenderness and justice towards our Rev. Brother, the appellant.

It may be a question with some of us, whether we are bound in any way to entertain this subject,—whether we should not entirely pass it over and hold ourselves aloof from it ?

I do not think that it would be expedient, or, indeed, that it would be just or reasonable to do so. In deference to the venerable Bishop who has commended this question to his Synod, (calling special attention, indeed, to one part of it, but, as I understand it, intending in what he has said to include the whole matter of the appeal ;) in courtesy to our brethren who have communicated to us what passed at their Synod, with a view to the adoption of the same or similar resolutions by ourselves ; and I may add, in acknowledgment of the eminent zeal and ability which has been shown by the appellant, whose singleness of purpose and earnest self-sacrificing adherence to principle I appreciate from the very bottom of my heart ;—in respect, I say, to these considerations, I think it would be in the highest degree ungracious, were we not to entertain this question : and when we consider the somewhat startling fact, that the legitimacy of an appeal which involves some of the most momentous points of faith and practice, has been affirmed by two diocesan Synods of our Church, it would, I think, be very unreasonable if we were to separate without my having endeavoured to aid myself as well as you in arriving at some just conclusion on the subject.

The next question, then, for our consideration is, whether we can adopt the same resolutions which were very ably proposed by the Warden of Trinity College, and unanimously adopted by the St. Andrew's Synod ? (It may not be known to all of you, that a similar resolution as to the legitimacy of the appeal has been passed by the Synod of Ross and Moray.)

So far am I from being able to recommend to you the adoption of this very important resolution, that if it were necessary for me at this moment to give an opinion on the subject, it would be in direct contradiction to that proposition. If forced to give an opinion at this moment one way or other, I should be bound to say that I do not think that this appeal (meaning thereby what the appellant means by it,) has legitimately arisen. In a private conversation with the appellant, I informed him that this was the case; but I added, that though it was out of the question, with my present opinion, for me to affirm the St. Andrews' resolution, yet that in a matter of great responsibility, involving many considerations which, to a great extent, are new to my mind, I did not wish needlessly to propose a direct negative to that resolution. I felt that with such an authority against me as the Warden of Trinity College, whose opinion has been adopted unanimously by the Synod of St. Andrews, and has since been, to a certain degree, sanctioned by the Primus of the Church, I might very properly feel some mistrust of my own judgment; at least so far as to be unwilling to recommend to you, at the present moment, an express negative of a resolution thus proposed and sanctioned.

It was after a conversation to this effect that the appellant determined (on his own responsibility,) to postpone the formal communication of the appeal to this Synod. He perfectly understood that any indisposition on my part expressly to deny the legitimacy of the appeal, did not arise from any actual present doubt on my mind, but merely from some mistrust of my judgment in a case involving grave responsibility, and many questions which, to a great extent, were new to me, and in which I was opposed to persons for whose judgment I have great respect. It was, however, quite understood between us, that I should take occasion to state to you the view in which this question presents itself to my mind.

In the first place, then, I think it should be distinctly understood *what is included in the appeal*; and what we shall be strictly bound to discuss and decide, if the appeal is indeed legitimate. Many people seem to think, that because the Bishop of St. Andrews has called special attention to the question of "passive or non-passive Communion," this appeal is nothing more than an application for some decision on that subject by this Church.

Undoubtedly this is part of the question. This portion of the question arises from the view taken by the late Bishop Luscombe of the case of a Russian lady, whom he felt it his duty to repel from

the Holy Communion. As he was then regarded as a Missionary Bishop of the Church, I should, for myself, have no difficulty in admitting that an appeal would lie to this Church from this decision. The appellant ought, indeed, even in that case, to be the lady whom he repelled, rather than the Bishop, who pronounced the judgment. It is urged, however, that the lady, having public opinion on her side, and being able to obtain communion from other priests, had no object in appealing; whereas the Bishop, who had felt it right to take an unpopular course, might naturally have wished for the support of his Church; and as this consideration seems to me to have weight, I, for one, should be willing to allow the legitimacy of the appeal, if it were confined to this part of the question; and the principal resolution which will be submitted to you is framed to meet, to a certain extent, this part of the case.*

The appeal itself, however, strictly speaking, is much more than this. It is nothing less than an application to this Church for its judgment on the 44 doctrinal and 48 disciplinary propositions contained p. 315 and following of the appellant's printed volume. If we affirm that the appeal is legitimate, then we are bound (as it seems to me,) in all honesty and reasonableness, to proceed to a consideration of those propositions, which have been anathematised by the Rev. appellant, at the bidding of the Eastern Church; and either to sustain him in what he has done, as being in accordance with catholic truth and the doctrines of the Church, or condemn him on account of it. Now, to say nothing at present of the disciplinary propositions which bear chiefly on that part of the case which relates to the refusal of communion to the Russian lady, the questions raised by the doctrinal propositions embrace a wide range of the doctrines of Christianity; in some instances involving the most positive assertions on points on which our Church has thought it wise and reverent to be silent; in others, the authoritative declaration of the meaning of articles and rubrics of the Church, which others interpret in a sense very different from that of which the appellant conceives them to be capable. I say nothing of the truth or falsehood of the doctrines which are implied by anathematising those 44 propositions. But this I say, that the

* It has also been suggested by one of the clergy of this diocese, that as a clergyman who should repel any one from the Holy Communion is directed to report that decision to the Ordinary, the Bishop might feel, that in appealing, in this instance, to the Church from which he had received his mission, he was acting in the spirit of the direction in the rubric.

case must be strong indeed, to make it necessary for a Church, on the appeal of one or two members, (though one of them may have been a Missionary Bishop of the Church,) to reconsider a wide range of the most sacred doctrines, with a view to what would be equivalent to an authoritative enactment of articles or canons on points upon which it has hitherto been thought wise to abstain from such declarations, and the interpretation of expressions in which members of the Church, of various shades of opinion, have been content to acquiesce for three hundred years. I do not say that we may not conceive a case in which an appeal might render such a course inevitable; but at any rate I am sure that the result would be so disastrous, that we ought to be quite sure that the necessity was absolute, before we yield to it. If the appeal is, indeed, legitimate, then let us not shrink from its fair responsibility; but let us see distinctly how great is that responsibility,—how serious are the consequences of affirming that the appeal is legitimate; and let us not hastily pronounce it legitimate without a careful consideration of the circumstances on which its legitimacy depends.

Now it appears to me that in order that any member of a church may be entitled to call on his church in this way, to affirm or deny the truth of propositions which he has been led to anathematise, the occasion for his doing so must have arisen out of some transaction in which he has been acting as the authorized and accredited messenger of the church. It is obviously out of all reason that a private individual should be able, by engaging on his own private responsibility in controversy with a foreign church, or by entering into relations with it of any kind, to involve his church in the necessity of adding as many articles or canons to those already sanctioned by her synod, as that foreign church may arbitrarily think necessary to show the orthodoxy of another. An ambassador must be acting in the mission intrusted to him, and according to the instructions which he has received, in order to entitle him to the support of the authorities at home. If he exceed the measure of his commission, and involve himself in relations with bodies to which he was not accredited, he cannot expect that the government at home will think itself bound to give opinions which might lead to most disastrous consequences, and discussions on the questions which, on his private responsibility, he may have stirred. In the present instance, it is plain that the appellant had no mission even from what was then the only Church with which he was connected, when he first went to Russia for purposes of private study. The only

question that can occur, is, whether his subsequent connection with Bishop Luscombe gave him any such official character in connection with the Church in Scotland, as that he is authorized to appeal to us on questions which have arisen out of transactions in which on Bishop Luscombe's part, or on his own views of duty, he engaged. This will greatly depend on Bishop Luscombe's mission and its limits; and I own that I cannot see that several of the steps which that Right Rev. Prelate was led to take, were authorized by the mission which he had received; or were such as the Church by which he had been consecrated, was responsible for making herself a party to, on an appeal for her sanction.

Bishop Luscombe's position was somewhat anomalous and unusual. His letters of collation, however, appear to have been drawn up with care, and he was therein solemnly enjoined "not to disturb the peace of any christian society established as a national Church in whatever nation he may chance to sojourn; but to *confine* his ministrations to British subjects, and to such other Christians as may profess to be of a Protestant Episcopal Church." This solemn injunction should, I think, have made him careful to confine himself, as strictly as possible, within the limits of his mission. It shows that the Church from which he received his authority, felt the liability to embarrassments which such a position would bring upon him, and in which she might herself become involved.

Now I have before admitted, that on refusing the Holy Communion to the Russian lady, he was perhaps authorized to appeal to his Church for support. Not content, however, with such an appeal, he commissioned the Rev. appellant as his Clerk to Russia (indeed to all Catholic Bishops) for the purpose of preventing (if possible) the admission of this Russian lady to the Holy Communion by the chaplain to the British embassy, in the British chapel at St. Petersburg. While in Russia, the appellant had "official conferences" with the Arch-priest on the subject of reconciliation, and the result of these conferences was, that at the bidding of the Arch-priest, he said Anathema to the 44 doctrinal propositions before referred to. It was this act which gave occasion for his appeal.

Now, let any one ask himself, whether Bishop Luscombe had any mission, much more any jurisdiction in Russia, or over the British chaplain there, acting, no doubt, under the license of the Bishop of London. If he thought it necessary to inform that chaplain of the case, he might have done it without sending his chaplain there.

Probably the most formal and regular procedure would have been by communication to the Bishop of London; and there Bishop Luscombe's responsibility would have ~~been~~ ^{ended}. The Bishop seems to have felt his need of support from the Church in Scotland, for the appellant on his way to Russia, was to visit Scotland to obtain (if it could be had) the support of the Scotch Bishops. The mission, however, was not dependent on obtaining that support, and, in fact, the appellant failed to obtain it.

A still more fatal objection, however, (as it seems to me,) to the legitimacy of the appeal, arises from the proceedings of the appellant in Russia. If he proceeded thither for the sole purpose of preventing the admission of the Russian lady to communion in the British chapel at St. Petersburg, how did this mission authorize him to engage in official conferences with the Arch-priest on the subject of reconciliation to the Eastern Church? or what pretence is there for his saying that because he had then been appointed Deacon to Bishop Luscombe, this unauthorized conference on the subject of reconciliation, and the act—to which it led—of anathematising 44 doctrinal propositions, were on any such official basis in respect of the Scotch Church as that he has a right to appeal to our Synods?

Nor does it seem to me improper to remind you that the death of Bishop Luscombe, at a very critical period of this transaction, must be regarded as weakening any tie by which the appellant may have been ecclesiastically connected with the Scottish Church, and with this question in relation to ourselves.

For these reasons, if I were called upon at this moment to pronounce an opinion, it must be against the legitimacy of his appeal; but inasmuch as such questions as those relating to Bishop Luscombe's mission, and the relation which he bore both to the Church which had sent him and other christian bodies, are new to us, and involve some difficulties, I am not sorry that the appellant (on his own responsibility) has postponed the formal communication of his appeal. In the meantime I submit to you the reasons which at present weigh with me. I am quite sure that in a matter of this responsibility, more time for reflecting on the validity of those reasons, and such arguments as may be adduced against them, will be felt to be very desirable; and I shall be thankful to any of you who will, after due consideration, inform me of any flaw that may occur to them in my statement, and, on the other hand, any thing in confirmation of it.

It may, perhaps, be said, that such objections as these imply a

disposition to evade the responsibility of pronouncing a judgment ; and that it would rather be the duty of a Church (especially one that is unfettered by any connection with the State) to be ready to give a reply to any one who has even seemingly some ground for appealing to her opinion, ^{an} ~~thus~~ to avail herself of such reasons as the case may present for questioning his right to appeal.

It must be remembered, however, that, the gravest reasons may exist, connected with the spiritual state of her own children, why a Church should refrain from adding to canons and dogmas which she has already decreed. We all know that the most serious errors on the subject of the Blessed Eucharist have been occasioned by attempts to define *the manner* in which those holy mysteries become the means of conveying to the faithful their high and unsearchable gift. The very highest sanction, moreover, has been given to the principle of considering the religious state of those before whom any particular view of Divine truth is to be brought ; and instances will occur to every one in which our Lord, himself the true Counsellor and Revealer of secrets, withheld himself from answering directly the questions which were submitted to him. To my own mind it appears indisputable that in any case in which a member of a Church, not in any way officially or ecclesiastically commissioned, has taken steps which have led to the stirring of questions, the discussion of which would appear to the authorities of his Church in the highest degree injurious to the cause of Divine truth and the spiritual welfare of the members of the Church, he must not expect to be allowed to force such discussion on his Church : and while the purity of his motives may be most cheerfully admitted, and the refusal to entertain particular questions may not be without results very much to be lamented, yet the duty of the ecclesiastical authority is to consider what is best for the custody of that portion of Christ's flock which is committed to its charge in the fold of The Good Shepherd.

Before I leave this part of the subject, I would remark, that where communion between independent branches of the Catholic Church has been suspended through a long course of years, whether from misapprehension of each other's meaning, or even from mere infrequency of intercourse, and where either Church has in the lapse of time diverged considerably from the other in respect of ritual or discipline, it is but too likely that an attempt to revive communion will issue—through human infirmity—in more avowed estrangement, rather than in more acknowledged unity. This will certainly be the case unless a great

mutual desire is felt for the restoration of communion ; and unless there is not only a disposition to put a favourable construction on any differences of practice or statement, but a well-considered conviction that such favourable construction can be put without any undue violence to the plain and obvious meaning of acts or expressions. Hence it is plain that any attempt for a restoration of communion must emanate from the ecclesiastical authority in such Church. Should the Russian Church, by any Synodical act, make overtures to this Church for a revival of communion, it would then be our duty to consider the terms of such communion. In the meantime, we can rejoice in believing that that great branch of the Catholic Church bears witness to the same glorious creed which we confess, although it may not seem to us expedient to originate any overture on our part for a closer communion, nor could we sanction the act of a private individual in seeking communion in that Church, until through the Bishops and Synods of the respective Churches such communion had been formally and satisfactorily restored. If, on the other hand, any member of that Church should seek communion with our own branch, the part of Christian wisdom would surely be to deal tenderly and discreetly with such a case; with a due recollection of the facts, that on the one hand the person so seeking communion was the member of a Church which is considered by our own a true member of Christ's mystical body : and on the other, that our Church is in fact involved in the excommunication of the whole Western Church by the Church in the East.

Although from such views as I have thus—I fear very imperfectly expressed,—I have been unable to recommend to you the adoption of the first resolution, which was passed at Dundee in March; (a resolution which seems to me to pledge that Synod to a line which it yet evidently hesitates to take,) I am thankful to see no difficulty in expressing sympathy and concurrence with our reverend brethren in the resolution which most directly contains their reply to the questions which were expressly submitted to them by their Bishop. The resolution which has been prepared for your consideration, is not drawn up in precisely similar terms with those which were used at Dundee. The difference has arisen from a wish on my part to meet the case which has occasioned the appeal that has been brought before us, as directly as my view of the circumstances attending it enabled me to do: and I should suppose that no member of this Synod is likely to dissent from the proposition, that the *right* to receive the Holy Communion is the privilege of true members of the Church; and that the question as

to who are the true members of the Church, must *ultimately* be decided by the proper ecclesiastical authority, and does not depend on the private judgment as to their own fitness of those who may seek communion. The only objection which I can see to our adoption of such a resolution as this, is that the affirmation of it by this or any diocesan Synod may seem to imply an admission, that it is possible to doubt what is the mind of the Church in a matter which is too plain to admit of question. At the Reformation, the Church abandoned the rule of compulsory confession; but in no degree intended to relax the strictness of her requirement as to the faith and holiness of communicants. Under the experience of the unspeakable evils which the rule of compulsory confession had led to, she contented herself with warning her children in the most solemn language, of the danger of an unworthy reception of the sacred mysteries; and with expressly prohibiting the admission of any to communion who had not been confirmed, or who were not ready or desirous to be confirmed; but she reserved to herself the right of repelling any notorious and scandalous offenders. And we shall do well to beware of any course which would, on the one hand, lead to relaxation of the holy strictness which is contemplated by the rubrics of the Church; or, on the other hand, lead to any thing approaching to that system of compulsory confession which, after experience of its enormous evils, the Church abandoned. With respect to viciousness of life, the Church seems to act on the following system: she warns any evil liver, that he come not nigh the altar until he have repented of his sins. She institutes no inquisition, however, into the secret conscience or private practice of those who, after warning, draw nigh; but in the case of any notorious and scandalous offender, she repels such a transgressor from the feast which he would profane. It has seemed to me that we shall most nearly act according to the judgment of our Holy Mother, if we endeavour to frame our conduct, with respect to heretics or schismatics, by a rule corresponding to her practice with respect to offenders against the moral law. We must not only use no expressions implying that the Church can ever tolerate the sins of heresy or schism; but we must warn any who are guilty of such sins, that they are not "meet partakers of these Holy Mysteries." We are not, however, to institute an inquisition into the secret opinions or unknown practice of those who, thus warned, approach. On the other hand, if any one, by *overt and open* acts of heresy or schism, has made himself *notorious and scandalous* for such offences, we must not hesi-

tate to repel. This is the rule on which I have humbly endeavoured to act; and though it is not to be expected, that in a matter confessedly of great delicacy and difficulty, the course which may be taken by any individual will approve itself to the minds of others; I am thankful to believe, that I am endeavouring faithfully, as well as tenderly, to act according to the system of the Church, (so far as circumstances enable me to do so,) and that I share the view of very many in whose judgment I greatly confide. May I add, that it seems to me that I shall be able to act most freely and usefully in the furtherance of those objects which we all have at heart, if the clergy will abstain from pressing to a division such resolutions as some of those of which notice has been given. I believe that my Reverend Friend who has placed these notices on the paper, would, at my request, have withdrawn these resolutions; as has been done by another Reverend Brother, with respect to a resolution which he had intended to bring forward, and I beg to thank him for the ready manner in which he acted on my request:—I was, however, so unwilling even to seem to stop the freest discussion of matters of ecclesiastical interest in our Synod, that I forbore from making any such request in this instance. It may be, however, that our Reverend Brother will feel, that the discussion for which he wished has been sufficiently raised by the resolutions recommended by myself; and if he should think it well to withdraw those resolutions, at all events *for the present*, I think he will act with a wise discretion; though I do not wish to induce him to do so contrary to his own judgment. At all times, I trust, my Reverend Brethren will find me most ready to entertain and discuss with them such questions as they wish to bring forward in a spirit of candour and brotherly love.

